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Front Page Edit Page Other Page

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Needed: A CIA Watchdog

In a report just released, the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (of Congress) takes sharp issue with Defense Secretary McNamara's decision not to build a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

The point is not whether the committee or McNamara is right, but that a congressional committee, with some authority behind it, is in a position to analyze the McNamara decision. The committee report was unanimous, although the group is evenly divided between Senate and House and eight of the 18 members are Republicans.

No committee of Congress is in position to perform a similar service with respect to our intelligence agencies. The Central Intelligence Agency, for instance, operates in high secrecy

—there is no "watchdog" group in Congress informed enough and close enough to the agency to do knowledgeably what the Joint Atomic Energy Committee has done.

Former President Truman thinks the CIA has strayed far afield from the purposes for which it was created in his administration. Some "searching" questions should be asked, he said. But there is no authoritative committee in Congress to ask them.

It is important that there is a bipartisan, well-equipped committee in Congress to keep a constant check on these matters, for the guidance of the public and especially Congress.

The secret, vital intelligence field should be given the same treatment.

The same editorial also appeared in the PITTSBURGH, PA., PRESS, Dec. 23, 1963 and the COLUMBUS, OHIO, CITIZEN JOURNAL, Dec. 24, 1963.